

Appl. No. 10/612,445
Filing Date 07/02/2003
Inventor Magnusson

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-14 (Canceled)

Claim 15 (Currently amended): A method for packaging and ~~stabilizing~~ retort sterilizing a food product, comprising the steps of:

providing an open container comprising a laminate including a base layer formed from a ~~liquid-absorbing material selected from the group consisting of paper and cardboard~~, at least one outer layer comprising a first polymeric material and facing the outside of said container, and at least one inner layer comprising a second polymeric material and facing the inside of said container;

adding a food product to the inside of the open container under non-aseptic conditions;

closing the container opening and thereby sealing the inside of the container from exposure to external microbial attack;

exposing the outside of the container to ~~moist heat~~ retort sterilization at a temperature between about 90°C and about 121°C;

maintaining said ~~exposure to said moist heat~~ retort sterilization for a time sufficient to heat said container and said food product to a temperature providing ~~stabilization~~ sterilization of said food product while simultaneously retaining a level of dimensional stability and mechanical strength in said container for transport and subsequent storage of said container;

thereafter allowing the container and the food product contained therein to cool;

wherein said outer layer polymeric material is selected from the group consisting of polypropylene, oriented polypropylene, metalized oriented polypropylene, high density polyethylene, metalized high density polyethylene, linear low density polyethylene, polyethylene terephthalate, metalized polyester and amorphous polyester, and said inner layer polymeric material is selected from the group consisting of polypropylene, high density polyethylene, linear low density polyethylene, polyethylene terephthalate, and amorphous polyester.

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Claim 16 (Previously presented): A method as claimed in claim 15, wherein said polymeric material in said inner and outer layers may be the same or different and each has a melting point sufficiently high to withstand exposure to said moist heat in a manner consistent with said dimensional stability and mechanical strength of said sealed container.

Claim 17 (Cancelled)

Claim 18 (Previously presented): A method as claimed in claim 15, wherein said exposing and maintaining steps are carried out at a sufficient temperature and for a sufficient time to stabilize said food product via sterilization.

Claim 19 (Previously presented): A method as claimed in claim 15, wherein said exposing and maintaining steps are carried out at a sufficient temperature and for a sufficient time to stabilize said food product via pasteurization.

Claim 20 (Cancelled)

Claim 21 (Previously presented): A method as claimed in claim 15, wherein said laminate additionally includes a barrier layer between said base layer and said inner layer, said barrier layer comprising a material selected from the group consisting of aluminum, an aluminum oxide coating, a silica coating, ethylene/vinyl alcohol, polyvinyl alcohol, metalized oriented polyester and metalized oriented polypropylene.

Claim 22 (Previously presented): A method as claimed in claim 15, wherein said laminate additionally includes an intermediate layer between said base layer and said outer layer, said intermediate layer comprising a polymeric material selected from the group consisting of polypropylene, low density polyethylene, medium density polyethylene, high density polyethylene and amorphous polyester.

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Claim 23 (Previously presented): A method as claimed in claim 15, wherein said laminate additionally includes a coating adjacent one or both sides of the barrier layer, said coating being selected from the group consisting of an adhesion plastic, a heated sealable plastic, a primer and a lacquer.

Claim 24 (Previously presented): A method as claimed in claim 15, wherein said outer layer and said inner layer comprise a polyester.

Claim 25 (Previously presented): A method as claimed in claim 15, wherein said outer layer and said inner layer comprise a polymeric material including polyethylene terephthalate and from 1.5 to 2.5 weight percent of glycol/cyclohexanedimethanol.

Claim 26 (Previously presented): A method as claimed in claim 15, wherein said article has an F_0 value between 3 and 18.